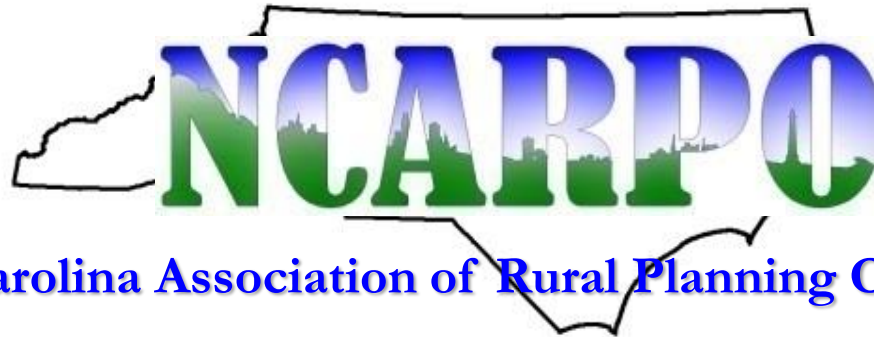


RPOs IN NORTH CAROLINA

Secondary Systems Subcommittee
House Select Committee on Strategic Transportation Planning and
Long Term Funding Solutions

February 1, 2016



North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations

Janet Robertson
NCARPO President
Lumber River RPO

Law Establishing RPOs

- 2000 - GS 136-210 through 213 directed NCDOT to study Rural Planning Organizations (RPO)
- 2001 – Based on results of the study, NCDOT began working with local elected officials to form RPOs
 - Between 2001 and 2003, 20 RPOs were established
 - All areas of NC are now represented by either an MPO or RPO



Definition of RPO

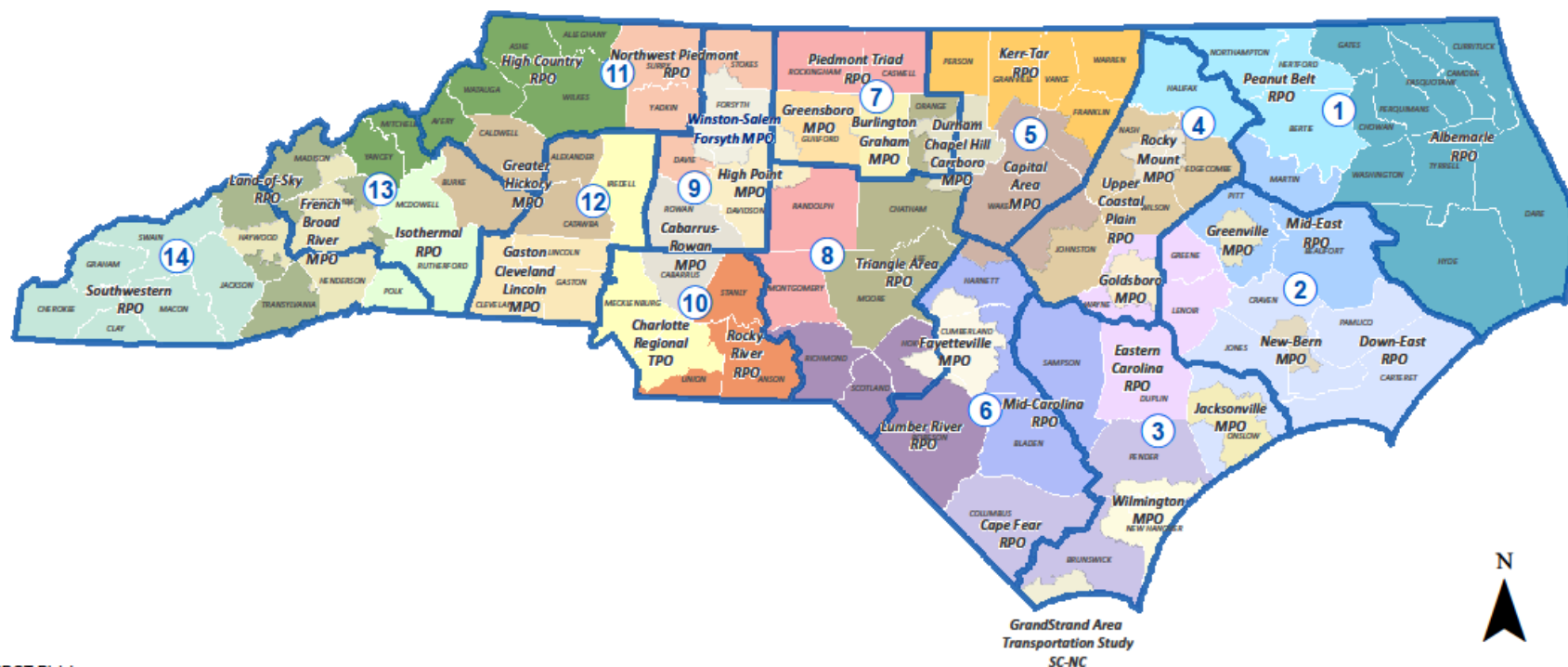
- An RPO, as defined in NC General Statute 136-210, is:
“A voluntary organization of local officials formed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work cooperatively with the Department of Transportation to plan rural transportation systems and to advise the Department on rural transportation policy”
- The area represented by an RPO shall include 3 to 15 contiguous counties or a minimum population of 50,000
 - Noncontiguous counties that are adjacent to the same MPO may form an RPO
 - Not all municipalities in a proposed RPO must join the organization, however the county must be a member of the RPO.
 - **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) areas shall not be included**



Comparison of RPOs to MPOs

	RPOs	MPOs
Number	18	19
How Formed	Area identified locally based on common transportation/land use concerns, with agreements by all counties; minimum of 3 counties required; cities may join and vote per MOU	Area identified by US Census, includes central city and other areas that meet density criteria; planning area may be expanded, but not contracted Federal legislation established MPOs starting in the 1960s
Designation	Chartered by NC Secretary of Transportation during 2001-2003	Designated by NC Secretary of Transportation on behalf of Governor based on population criteria by US Census and FHWA
Population	Minimum 3 counties or 50,000 population	Minimum 50,000 population; Special planning requirements for areas over 200,000

Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Rural Planning Organizations, and NCDOT Divisions



Map Created by
North Carolina
Department of Transportation
Transportation Planning Branch
November 2015

RPOs give rural areas a formal voice in the transportation planning process by providing “a place at the table” for local officials, staff, and citizens who know their areas best.



RPO Responsibilities

- Assist the NCDOT in developing Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP)
- Develop and prioritize projects the organization believes should be included in the STIP
- Provide a forum for public participation in the transportation planning and project development processes
- Provide transportation related information to local governments
- Other duties as determined



RPO Structure

- **Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** –governing policy board
 - Local Elected Officials
 - BOT Area Representative
 - Other members designated by the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)
- **Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)**
 - Member Government(s) Staff Representatives (e.g., managers, planners)
 - NCDOT (Division Engineer or Staff Designee)
 - Other Agencies and citizens with an interest in transportation planning
- **Lead Planning Agency (LPA)**
 - Designated Staff (Council of Governments, County, City)



RPO Funding

- **80% from Federal Funds** (combination from the National Highway Performance Program, Surface Transportation Program, Highway Safety Improvement Program, & Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program)

These Federal Funds are passed through to NCDOT. Placed in the State Planning and Research Fund; Transportation Planning Branch earmarks it for the RPOs in the annual work program.

- **20% from Local Match**



Who, What, and Where do NC's RPOs plan for?

36,832 Square Miles or

75.41%

of NC's Total Land Area

45,234 Road Miles or

56.91%

of NC's Total Road Miles
in 2015



3,020,628

Individuals in 2010

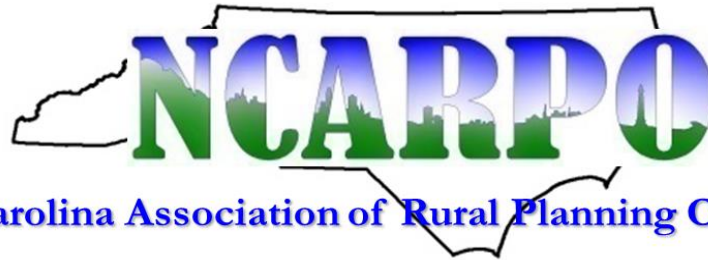
RPO Projects and Activities

- Corridor Studies
- Regional Locally Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plans
- Regional and Local Bicycle Plans
- Pedestrian Plans
- Sidewalk and Parking Inventories
- Provide GIS Mapping and Analysis to support transportation projects
- Create and maintain a transportation data warehouse for the region



Other Activities of RPO Staff

- Participate in the Merger Process (Project development and permitting processes)
- Serve on regional and statewide boards and committees
- Assist communities with grant writing and public involvement
- Coordinate with neighboring RPOs and MPOs
- Provide support for TAC and TCC



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